FAMILY LIFE

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PROBLEMS AFTER FORTY

Problems after forty are merely the problems of youth complicated by time. Like our religious concepts, they grow with our growth and change with our change; but in the last analysis they are based on the same fears and insecurities we carried from childhood into adolescence, from adolescence into adult life.

We have a habit of measuring life in decades, and no birthdays are as thrilling or as threatening as those with a zero attached to them. 10, 20, 30, are stepping stones toward adult independence; 40, 50, 60, are millstones around the neck of middle age; 70, 80, 90, are milestones on the road of triumphant old age. In the twenties we acquire a family; in the thirties we acquire things; in the forties we acquire anxieties. Suddenly life is half-spent in spite of the scientifically increased life-span. It is a moment for reckoning with both the past and future, a time for self-evaluation and for the re-evaluation of accomplishments and goals. The way in which we live our forties determines our attitudes toward the fifties and sixties, and whether or not we live to enjoy the seventies, eighties, and nineties.

To have reached middle age safely in a world of automobiles and coronaries is a commendable feat in itself, but to be "middle-aged" is too often considered a badge of mediocrity. It suggests middle-of-the-road conservatism, a jealous and jaundiced eye on the younger generation, a dispirited desire for premature retirement, a defeatist attitude toward the future. . . In other countries the middle years bring hard-earned respect; in the United States they bring chiefly the loss of youth. After forty a man may yet reach the peak of his productivity, but he has passed the peak of his expectations. Mounting costs of adolescent children and the endless demands of an inflated standard of living make financial security increasingly unattainable. Furthermore, the average man finds little security within himself, because there has never been time enough or courage enough or perhaps curiosity enough for either self-examination or self-realization.

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What Are the Typical Problems of Middle Age?

Physical Problems, bred of anxiety, accident, or approaching age, loom

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large after forty. Because the word "psycho-somatic" is so often confused with "imaginary," a person may avoid an annual check-up for fear of being thought neurotic or of being told an unpleasant truth. There are glasses and hearing aids to be avoided, the dread of cancer, heart disease, stomach ulcer, sexual inadequacy, menopause, alcoholism, a "nervous break-down," to be hidden even from oneself. One very real danger is the increased use of alcohol as an escape from weariness and insecurity. A habit developed in the teens as a proof of manhood, in the twenties becomes a symbol of sociability, in the thirties an antidote to intolerable fatigue, in the forties a mask behind which to hide anxiety or a sense of futility. It can become both the cause and result of depression, both the cause and result of failure. It can also become the basis for chronic friction between a husband and wife, especially if the behavior is mirrored in the life of their teen-age children. A habit which may seem acceptable in adults becomes alarming in the young.

Emotional and marital problems are heightened in middle life. People are more lonely after forty and more acutely aware of the fact. A wistful need to be admired and desired creates many a triangle which greater understanding could prevent. A husband should learn from his wife, not another woman, that he is far more attractive in his maturity than he was in his youth. A wife should learn from her husband, not another man, that she has gained more beauty than she has lost with the years. Virility is largely an attitude of mind, and menopause can free a woman for a much more satisfying love life in her fifties than she achieved under the restraint imposed by potential pregnancy.

DIVORCE is financially more feasible and therefore too frequent after forty. Common goals of home-owning, child-rearing, friend-making, have been achieved. Children who held parents together are now young adults building relationships of their own. Too often individual interests have gradually taken the place of shared activities. Communication becomes sporadic or non-existent unless it has been based on something beside budgets and babies. Comments grow critical, silences become hostile. Men and women think less and less of what they have, and more and more of what they lack in their life together. Unresolved conflicts may seek resolution in court, but human beings are incurably optimistic in their search for fulfillment. In middle life second and third marriages are frequent, always jeopardized by that strange tendency to repeat the original pattern when choosing another mate.

Lack of a mate creates serious emotional tension for many a single woman and bachelor, as well as for the widow who is torn between loneliness and and loyalty to a memory. Sooner or later each one feels unwanted. Some retreat into a state of studied security and talk much of freedom-to-be-themselves. Others may turn to an emotional attachment for one of the same sex as an escape from their solitary state. Some try to reassure themselves

by promiscuous experimentation without the responsibility of matrimony, while others plunge into ill-advised marriage, for which they are prepared by neither temperament nor experience.

Parental Problems are emotional as well as financial while a family is growing up. Father feels taken for granted, ignored, used. Mothers are hurt by adolescent hostilities and the struggle to adjust to the new roles of mother-in-law and grandmother. Then there are the "old people" to be provided for, often with more duty than love. They can manage to generate both hostility and guilt, yet when they die, they leave middle-aged children strangely bereft, appalled to find that they themselves are now the "older generation" potentially dependent and even superfluous in the eyes of dutiful offspring.

There are characteristic *vocational problems* in middle life. Hope no longer springs eternal, with success just around the corner. There is not only the fear of losing a job, but the fear of losing status in a profession. Younger men forge ahead. Recent training and boundless energy give them an advantage. For a man to recognize his own limitations and accept them, is not easy. In a frantic effort to escape them, he may do many foolish things. He may cling to a job he has long hated because he dares not risk change, or he may walk out on a job that offers rich opportunities because he questions his ability to take advantage of them. He may decide to retire and rest on inadequate financial laurels because he fears to lose what he has, or he may work compulsively to make more money because this is the only symbol of success that remains after he has recognized his own creative inadequacy. Quite as confused is the career woman who decides that independence and vocational prestige are poor substitutes for companionship and children, to say nothing of her more aggressive sister who finds herself thwarted by the limitations placed upon business and professional women even in a land of supposed equality of opportunity.

What Can A Counselor Do About These Conflicts of Middle Age

If you would counsel wisely those who face the problems of middle life, *face them first in yourself.* Your own life furnishes the best possible laboratory for clinical study if you have the courage to use it. Select a counselor you do not know personally and devote at least four hours to evaluating yourself and your attitudes in terms of the decade of life in which you find yourself. Analyze your own conflicts and changes of attitude, your own health, wealth, and happiness, your own sense of values and future goals. This is one place where there is no substitute for experience, and older counselors have an advantage over their more theoretically trained juniors. They have lived through their forties and even their fifties. It means a great deal to a client to see that a person can come through the ordeal, whole in body and spirit, with an ever-increasing zest for life.

It is helpful to define the purpose of this period in human life. It is a time when every thoughtful human being asks himself the searching question: "What is my contribution to life,

not only regarded as a son or daughter, husband or wife, father or mother, but as an individual, judged *for* myself and *by* myself?" It is a period of self-appraisal without benefit of youthful illusions. It is a period for the re-evaluation and mature appreciation of personal relationships, filial, marital, parental, personal. It is a time for safeguarding the future, planning for retirement, for travel, for old age. It is a time for relating oneself to the world and to the universe, and for developing a deeply personal philosophy. It is a time in which to find courage to be oneself, not what other people expect one to be, and one in which to set new, realistic goals in keeping with a mature set of values.

Try to understand the client's drives and needs, past, and present, in order to direct them into new channels, some to drain off old hostilities, some to irrigate new ambitions.

Help the client evaluate himself. How does he feel about himself as a person? What frustrations have blocked his way? What are his fears for the future? Is he unduly concerned with what other people think?

Have the client list the roles he has filled during his lifetime, and is filling now. How many have been voluntary, how many have been forced upon him by family or circumstances? Which one has he enjoyed the most and which the least? What roles would he like to fill in the future?

Help the client evaluate his relationship with others: parents, family, friends, business acquaintances, strangers.

Encourage him to analyze and practice the art of communication. Does he really like people well enough to want to share their thoughts and feelings, and give his own in return? It is an enlightening experience to talk with strangers in an eating place, on the bus, or train. Show him that shyness can be a form of hostility and that boredom is but a measure of his conversational limitations.

Increase his awareness of places as well as people. Encourage travel, including arm-chair tours, and the exploration of his own state and city, to say nothing of his own garden.

Show him that he can correct defects in his education: slow reading, ignorance of foreign languages, of music, of art. He is never too old for school.

Challenge him with new ideas: "flying saucers," life on other planets, the mystery of archaeology. Stimulate curiosity, fire him with enthusiasm for the unknown.

Give him opportunity to evaluate his past religious experiences in terms of his present understanding, and to find a personal philosophy of life to fill his mature needs.

Free his spirit, that he may use himself to create, not merely to acquire. Help him to abandon old fears of failure, old needs to be "the best." Give him courage to experiment with new skills and to feel joy in the doing.

Finally, eliminate from your vocabulary the word "hobby" in favor of such terms as "avocation" and "intellectual adventure." "Hobby" is a trivial word that suggests "busy work" for empty, idle hours, and there is no time for empty, idle hours after forty. Leisure is another matter. What a man really needs is not escape from himself, but a private, personal life of his own in addition to his relationships with other people; a creative, inner life

where he dares experiment without fear of ridicule or destructive criticism. Therein lies mental health and emotional maturity for the forties, the fifties— and the nineties.

Walter B. Pitkin once wrote a telling book, "Life Begins At Forty." The title will long outlive the text, but one sentence expresses the major goal of middle age: "As people grow older, they grow more and more themselves." Our role as counselors is to help clients reach that goal, while doing our best to attain it for ourselves.

Mrs. Lucile Morrison

(Abstract of discussion before the 10th annual summer workshop in the techniques of counseling, at the AIFR Aug. 14, 1957.)

Notes From the AIFR

PARTICIPANTS in the Institute's 10th annual summer workshop in the techniques of counseling represented 15 states, together with the District of Columbia and Canada. Clergymen were in the majority.

Research Notes

HAVING A BABY is not as expensive as it used to be, according to a survey by the Health Information Foundation. It takes no account, however, of the ancient advertising slogan: "It isn't the first cost,—it's the upkeep!" American families spent almost a billion dollars on maternity care in 1956, it estimates, the average cost for medical and hospital expenses connected with birth being $225. In 1931 the average cost was $160 which the survey adjusts to the value of today's dollar and calculates at $258. One in six persons admitted to hospitals in the U.S. is an expectant mother, and one-third of these have part of their physicians' fees paid by insurance. Probably the largest factor in the present lesser expense of maternity is that the mother now stays only four or five days in the hospital, compared with 12 or 14 days a generation ago.

OF THE 1,200,000 separated or divorced mothers with at least one child under 18 in the same home, 71% were heads of families, says the U.S. Census, while 29% had moved in with some relative— presumably a parent in most instances.

MORE BABIES are born in the United States during July, August, and September than in any other three months of the year. There is a secondary peak in February and March. Cause is not known; apparently there are numerous factors involved.

Inexpensive Pamphlets

HELP YOUR CHILD PLAN HIS CAREER, by George Davenel. Pp. 15, price 25c from Good Reading Rack Service, 76 Ninth ave., New York 11, N.Y.

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES, how they help children and their parents, by Mrs. Annie Lee Sandusky. Pp. 94, Children's Bureau Pub. No. 359-1957, from U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington 25, D.C.

A LOOK AT THURSTON COUNTY'S OLDER PEOPLE, by Carol Larson Stone and Walter L. Slocum. Pp. 54, free on request to Institute of Agricultural Sciences, State College of Washington, Pullman, Wash. (Bulletin 573, May, 1957). Interesting survey pointing up the need of leisure time activities, special housing, better transportation, and adequate financial support.

SEX DIFFERENCES IN CHILDREN, by Mary J. Wright. Pp. 82 mimeographed, Report Series No. 2, Mental Health

Div., Dept. of Natl. Health and Welfare, Ottawa, Canada. *Limited distribution.*

SO YOU DIDN'T GO TO COLLEGE!, by Jerry Klein and Bill Fisger, Jr. Pp. 28, price 25c from Public Affairs Pamphlets, 22 E. 38th st., New York 16, N.Y. "We've got to get over the idea that the only way to prepare for life or to get prestige in the community is to go to college." Survey of opportunities in adult education, etc.

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Around the World

EDUCATION IN FAMILY LIFE is now obligatory for students 12 to 17 years of age in Peru, in accordance with a new Law of Family Education passed unanimously by both the Senate and Chamber of Deputies and signed by the president of the republic on March 15, 1957. It was introduced by Mrs. Irene Silva de Santolalla, only woman senator, who is also founder and director of the Institute of Marriage and Family Education in Lima, a private enterprise which she says she modeled on the AIFR.

PRIME MINISTER JAWAHARLAL NEHRU has emphasized the "utmost importance" of family planning, in reviewing the work of India's Ministry of Health. During the second five-year plan of the Ministry, the nation will spend the equivalent of ten million dollars in promoting use of methods of contraception.

PUBLIC APPROVAL of Canada's system of family allowances has increased steadily during its 12 years of operation, says Dr. George E. Davidson, deputy Minister of Welfare. Public opinion polls showed 49% of the population saying "It is a good thing" in 1943, 90% in 1955. Allowance (paid to the mother) was increased beginning Sept. 1 of this year, and is now $6 a month for each child under 10, $8 a month for those 10 - 16.

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Educational Notes

SOME HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS spend $200 or more on dates during the school year, according to a survey by Harold H. Punke of Alabama Polytechnic Institute. Two-thirds of them spend $50 or more each. Very few girls said they spent as much as $50 on social events during the school season, but they probably did not include ordinary expenses such as new clothes for the purpose, and hair-dos.

FAMILY ALLOWANCE LEAGUE, headed by J. J. Morris, is now in its sixth year. Its address is P. O. Box 395, Grand Central Station, New York 17, N.Y., and those interested in the financial problems of families with children should get in touch with it.

NEW JERSEY began a new divorce policy in 10 counties, on Sept. 1, 1957. If minor children are involved, any couple seeking a separation or divorce must attempt a reconciliation. The state Superior Court has appointed two "standing masters" to hear these cases. It is specified that they need not be lawyers but must be skilled in marriage counseling. The plan will continue in effect for three years and if successful will then be extended to all the other counties in the state.

SUMMER PROGRAMS for children who stay at home are described by Adele S. Mossler in a mimeographed bulletin that will be helpful to parents who have children ages three to eight. It may be obtained for 25c from the Play Schools Association, 41 W. 57th st., New York 19, N.Y.

NEW BOOKS IN BRIEF REVIEW

UNSETTLED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES, by D. H. Stott. Pp. 240, price $6 from Philosophical Library, 15 E. 40th st., New York 16, N.Y., 1956.

It is important for us to remember that instincts and emotions are normal, says Dr. Stott (Research Fellow, Institute of Education, University of Bristol, England.) "We have become so self-conscious about these normal emotions lately that when we feel them rising in ourselves we begin to think that we are maladjusted. But resentment, losing one's temper, getting irritable or depressed, feeling envious, jockeying for position, squabbling—these are just ways in which human nature works. A badly-behaved child is not necessarily maladjusted; it may just be taking a perfectly normal advantage of some adult who does not know how to deal with it or is afraid to do so." But if the home background is too bad, the child will get into real difficulty; and Dr. Stott lists 12 family patterns that he thinks will account for virtually all delinquency, concluding that the child's great need is for a *reliable* family rather than for a *good* family. He has a great deal to say about how teachers, social workers, and others can promote sound family life, and some disparaging remarks about the present rigidity and inadequacy of child guidance clinics and their exaggeration of the importance the IQ. This is a stimulating, sensible book, full of usable ideas and illustrations for anyone (including parents) who is associated with children.

A WOMEN DOCTOR LOOKS AT LIFE, by Marion Hilliard. Pp. 190, price $2.95 from Doubleday, Inc., 575 Madison ave., New York 22, N.Y., 1957.

Dr. Hilliard is chief of obstetrics and gynecology at Women's College Hospital, Toronto. Although unmarried, she has had plenty of opportunities to learn about marriage and family life from observation! This excellent book has already received so much attention in newspapers and magazines that it needs little more than to be listed. It promises to tell "what women should know about being female", and if it does not tell everything, it tells so much that no reader should be disappointed—whether woman or man. It merits richly the wide circulation that it will get.

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CAST THE FIRST STONE, by John M. Murtagh and Sara Harris. Pp. 307, price $4.50 from McGraw-Hill, 330 W. 42nd st., New York 36, N.Y., 1957.

The chief magistrate of the New York city courts and a clever writer have put together a sob-sister account of some aspects of prostitution in Manhattan and of the process of law enforcement against it. The poor girls really harm no one except themselves, they assure the reader solemly; they are the victims of circumstances and their activities should not be regarded as criminal—they are purely "moral" offenses and "the fundamental answers to the problem are to be found primarily in an improved society, a society, that will give greater recognition to its dependence on God and

will more adequately provide for the humblest of His children." One need not approve without reservations the New York law enforcement machinery to recognize that prostitution is a business which results in the degradation of a large number of men and women in each generation, spreads venereal diseases, produces graft and corruption in politics, fosters all sorts of sexual offenses and perversions, and creates broken homes and juvenile delinquency. It can be maintained only by the continual recruitment of fresh victims. It is at least not very difficult to attack the commercial aspect of it,—to destroy the middlemen and exploiters. The results of such a campaign are valuable in every way. Judge Murtagh might well use his prestige and energy for this purpose, instead of lending his name to an amateurish and short-sighted *apologia* for one of the most damaging cancers in our culture.

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COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR, by Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian. Pp. 547, price $6.95 from Prentice-Hall, 70 Fifth ave., New York 11, N.Y., 1957.

Collge textbook based on collected "readings." Dr. Turner is at UCLA, Dr. Killian at Florida State University.

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SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE AND DISCUSSION TECHNIQUES, by Harold P. Zelko. Pp. 264, price $5 from McGraw-Hill, 330 W. 42nd st., New York 36, N.Y., 1957.

While this book is directed to the business world, it contains many suggestions that could be applied, with little change, in family life—an area in which much help of this sort is needed. Mr. Zelko is professor of speech at Pennsylvania State University.

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CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE, a psychology of the growing person, by L. Joseph Stone and Joseph Church. Pp. 455, price from Random House, 457 Madison ave., New York 22, N.Y., 1957.

College textbook which will also appeal to many other circles. The authors are at Vassar College.

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A LAYMAN'S GUIDE TO PSYCHIATRY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS, by Eric Berne. Pp. 320 (paper covers), price from Simon & Schuster, 630 Fifth ave., New York 20, N.Y., 1957.

Revision of a book which appeared in 1947 under the title, *The Mind in Action*. Dr. Berne is a Freudian psychoanalyst who also relies on and prides himself on his "intuition."

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THE UNCONSCIOUS MOTIVES OF WAR, by Alix Strachey. Pp. 283, price $5 from International Press, 227 W. 13th st., New York 11, N.Y., 1957.

A psychoanalytical study printed in Great Britain. Mrs. Strachey, who is assisting her husband James Strachey in the translation and editing of Freud's writings, hopes that increasing knowledge, and increasing influence of women, may help to reduce the most terrible problem facing mankind.

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THE FAMILY IN PSYCHOTHERAPY, by C.F. Midelfort. Pp. 203, price $6.50 from McGraw-Hill Book Co., 330 W. 42nd St., New York 36, N.Y., 1957.

Important contribution to the techniques of dealing with mentally dis-

seased patients. As a modification or extension of group therapy, the patient and his family, or some of his closest relatives, make up the group which meets with the psychiatrist. "This study substantiates the idea that all mental illness develops in a family and is present in several members of the family. The factors that play a dynamic part in mental illness are at work in the family, and to treat one patient from the family without the others can influence only a part of the difficulty, leaving much untouched." Case histories and summaries of interviews illustrate these points, for the benefit primarily of specialists. Dr. Midelfort is in practice in LaCrosse, Wis.

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THE COMPLETE BOOK OF CHILDREN'S PLAY, by Ruth E. Hartley and and Robert M. Goldenson. Pp. 463, price $5 from Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 432 4th ave., New York 16, N.Y., 1957.

Extraordinarily complete, this book by two professional psychologists carries the youngsters from infancy through adolescence, combining a sound philosophy of child guidance with specific help in almost every possible detail. It is hard to think of any topic on which parents will not here find what they want to know.

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PSYCHOLOGY YOU CAN USE, by Dorothy Hazeltine Yates. Pp. 250, price $3.95 from Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 432 Fourth ave., New York 16, N.Y., 1957.

Relaxation and "mental set" are explained in this practical book by a former professor at San Jose, Calif., State College, now in private practice. Dr. Yates attracted attention some years ago when she coached the college boxing team to success by the use of auto-suggestion, and she explains how her techniques can be used not merely to avoid fatigue and stress, but to help you stop smoking, reduce your weight, avoid accidents in driving, and innumerable other daily activities. She criticizes conventional therapeutic techniques, very properly, when she says that "in dealing with motives and attitudes almost all attention has been given to studying the patient's wrong ones and little or none to developing right ones." She has concentrated a lifetime of scientific work in this volume for the general public, and it ought not merely to help many thousands of them directly, but encourage many clinical psychologists to change their methods, which now too often prove ineffective.

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MARRIAGE AND RHYTHM, by John L. Thomas. Pp. 180, price $3 from the Newman Press, Westminster, Md., 1957.

The Jesuit sociologist of St. Louis University considers "rhythm" from every point of view, pointing out to Roman Catholics that "considered as a means, the practice of rhythm must be considered morally indifferent. It is the purpose or reason on account of which it is used that makes it morally good or evil." He discusses the various reasons in detail, asserting that the Church lays down the general principles involved but that husband and wife "alone assume the serious obligations involved in childbearing and child rearing, and in the final analysis, they must decide the amount of these obligations they are willing and reasonably able to assume.' Subject again to the underlying principles, they may

want to delay the arrival of the first child for some time after marriage, and to space the children, as well as limit the total number. "In the final analysis, it is the good of the family which must be given priority in their thinking," but this must be understood in the light of the church's historic position, made more specific in this case by explicit interpretation of Pius XII.

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IF YOU LIVE WITH LITTLE CHILDREN, by Carolyn Kauffman and Patricia Farrell. p. 145 (no index), price $2.95 from G.P. Putnam's Sons, 210 Madison ave., New York, N.Y., 1957.

One of the best handbooks for parents of preschoolers—detailed, practical, well organized, and well-illustrated. This would be an invaluable gift to any parents who want to help children entertain themselves.

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THE DECLINE AND FALL OF SEX by Robert Elliot Fitch. Pp. 114 (no index), price $3 from Harcourt, Brace & Co. Madison ave., New York 17, N.Y., 1957.

Illustrating his thesis by citing works of contemporary (and much admired) novelists together with some scientists (e.g., the late Alfred C. Kinsey), Dr. Fitch argues that much of our modern American culture is badly mixed up concerning love. It has confused this with biology, he alleges, and the citations from other writers establish the point with sordid certainty. Sex itself is love, many people suppose—and they act accordingly. This mechanistic view of some of the finest ideals of life leads to disillusionment and disgust. Other writers have reached the same conclusion; one of the merits of this contribution is that it will appeal to the pseudo-sophisticates to whom such writers as William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway are the highest authorities,— though Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, and many others of almost equal rank are included. Dr. Fitch (dean of the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, Calif.) writes with urbane irony often alternated with rapier-like wit. The book is good reading, in every sense of the word.

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DELINQUENCY, sickness or sin?, by Richard Vincent McCann. Pp. 179, price $3 from Harper & Bros., 49 E. 33rd st., New York 16, N.Y., 1957.

Dr. McCann (Andover Newton Theological School) discusses "how parents, churches, and schools can turn delinquency into an opportunity," suggesting creative activities for clergy, parents, and laymen. An interesting appendix analyzes 39 books which have discussed the relation of the church to juvenile delinquency. Of these, he thinks that a bare half dozen give any constructive suggestions to the church. He himself holds that delinquency is both sickness and sin, and that these are "a human and social failure, responsibility for which we must share." This is a thought-provoking contribution to one of the great contemporary problems.

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AN ADVENTURE IN LOVE, by W. Taliaferro Thompson. Pp. 155 (no index), price $2.50 from John Knox Press, Box 1176, Richmond 9, Va., 1957.

Information and inspirational discussion of Christian family living. Dr. Thompson has, since 1920, taught courses in religious education in Union Theological Seminary (Richmond, Va.)

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